

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02937 01 OF 03 041728Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12
/088 W

-----119029 041742Z /41

O R 041514Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1651
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 TEL AVIV 2937

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: WEIZMAN'S NEW ROLE AS MODERATE HEIR APPARENT

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH NOT VERY COMFORTABLE WITH THE LABEL, WEIZMAN HAS EMERGED AS THE CABINET'S LEADING MODERATE. AT THE SAME TIME HIS EARLY SLIGHT EDGE OVER POTENTIAL RIVALS AS BEGIN'S SUCCESSOR HAS GREATLY WIDENED SINCE SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM. HIS STATURE, POPULARITY AND FOLLOWING MEAN HE IS PERHAPS THE ONE MINISTER WHO COULD BRING THIS GOVERNMENT DOWN BY RESIGNING OVER THE RIGHT ISSUE AT THE RIGHT TIME.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02937 01 OF 03 041728Z

2. WEIZMAN'S MODERATION, REPRESENTING A DRAMATIC TRANSFORMATION FROM HIS LIFE-LONG EXTREME HAWKISHNESS, IS PARTICULARLY EVIDENT IN HIS VIEWS ON ISRAEL-EGYPT ISSUES AND NEGOTIATIONS. HE OPPOSES SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE TERRITORIES AS IRRITANTS TO THOSE NEGOTIATIONS, BUT HIS MODERATION DOES NOT SEEM TO EXTEND TO THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM.

3. HE HAS EXPRESSED GROWING FRUSTRATION AT THE STALLED PEACE PROCESS, SHOWED SIGNS OF MOVING AWAY FROM BEGIN AND RECENTLY HINTED AT CONFRONTING OR QUITTING THE PRIME MINISTER. SUCH A MOVE WOULD BE EXTREMELY RISKY, PARTICULARLY FOR A MAN OF LITTLE POLITICAL EXPERIENCE LIKE WEIZMAN TAKING ON A PRO LIKE BEGIN. BUT THE IMPLICIT THREAT IS ENOUGH TO GIVE BEGIN PAUSE. OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT WEIZMAN IS POSTURING WHEN HE HINTS AT DIRECTLY OPPOSING ?3&8.; HE IS MORE LIKELY TO BIDE HIS TIME IN THE BELIEF THAT THE TIDE IS FLOWING IN HIS FAVOR AND IN THE EXPECTATION THAT BARRING MAJOR MIS-STEPS ON HIS PART, THE PREMIERSHIP WILL DEVOLVE TO HIM AS THE NATURAL HEIR. END SUMMARY

4. IN LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR MINISTER OF DEFENSE EZER WEIZMAN HAS COME OUT OF POLITICAL OBLIVION TO BECOME THE LEADING CONTENDER TO SUCCEED BEGIN. HE IS NOW REGARDED AS THE NATURAL (THOUGH UNDERSIGNED) HEIR TO BEGIN AND AT THE SAME TIME, IRONICALLY, THE ONLY PERSONALITY ON THE HORIZON WHO MIGHT ENGINEER BEGIN'S DOWNFALL. AN EARLY "PALACE REVOLT" IS MOST UNLIKELY, BUT IF THE PRESENT RULING COALITION WERE TO LOOK FOR A NEW PRIME MINISTER, AT THE MOMENT ONLY WEIZMAN HAS THE BREADTH OF SUPPORT TO SUSTAIN A CHALLENGE TO BEGIN.

5. CABINET'S LEADING MODERATE: AS WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, WEIZMAN HAS GRADUALLY ASSUMED THE MANTLE OF LEADERSHIP OF THE EMERGING MODERATE, PRAGMATIC WING OF THE CABINET -- A ROLE HE

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02937 01 OF 03 041728Z

DID NOT PRE-PLAN OR SEEK. THIS DEVELOPMENT ENSUED FROM THE SLOW DOWN IN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS AND THE RESULTANT NEW CLARITY OF THE ISSUES SEPARATING THE TWO SIDES. IT COINCIDES WITH THE TENTATIVE BEGINNING OF POLARIZATION IN THE CABINET. LEADERSHIP OF THE CABINET'S DOVES FELL TO WEIZMAN BECAUSE OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES LACKED THE WILL, STATURE OR METTLE TO TAKE ON THE HARDLINERS.

6. HE IS NOT VERY COMFORTABLE IN THAT ROLE. ALTHOUGH TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HE MAY EMPHASIZE MODERATION DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT, IN ISRAEL THE DOVE LABEL IS AN EMBARRASSMENT TO HIM. FOR ONE THING, IT SETS HIM APART FROM BEGIN IN THE PUBLIC MIND; FOR ANOTHER, IT HURTS HIM WITH HERUT'S CONSTITUENCY. IT IS THE SAME EMBARRASSMENT HE FEELS WHEN THE EGYPTIANS BY WORD AND DEED SINGLE HIM OUT AS A SORT OF "GOOD ISRAELI". HE IS TOO OFTEN BEING REFERRED TO AS "THE EGYPTIAN IN THE CABINET" FOR HIS OWN POLITICAL GOOD.

7. LIKELY SUCCESSOR: WHETHER DESPITE OR BECAUSE OF HIS EMERGENCE AS THE CABINET'S CHIEF MODERATE, WEIZMAN BY THE FORCE OF HIS PERSONALITY AND THE WEAKNESS OF THE COMPETITION IS INCREASINGLY SEEN AS THE NUMBER TWO MAN IN THIS GOVERNMENT. HE HAS

CLEARLY MOVED PAST ERLICH, AND NOW IS PULLING AHEAD OF DAYAN, AT SOME COST TO THEIR COMPLEX PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP. HIS RISE PROCEEDS ON TWO TRACKS THAT TEND TO CONVERGE: AS A LEADING FIGURE IN THE CABINET WITH THE CLOUT TO SUSTAIN HIS OUTSPOKENNESS; AND INCREASINGLY AS A LIKELY SUCCESSOR TO BEGIN. EVER SINCE LIKUD'S ELECTORAL VICTORY, TO WHICH AS CAMPAIGN MANAGER HE MADE A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION, WEIZMAN HAS BEEN THE FRONT RUNNER IN A RACE THAT HAS NOT YET ENTERED TRIAL HEATS. IN RECENT WEEKS HE HAS ADDED EVEN MORE DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND OTHER CONTENDERS. HE CAN BIDE HIS TIME IN THE EXPECTATION THAT SOONER OR LATER HE WILL BECOME PRIME MINISTER WHEN BEGIN STEPS DOWN OR OTHERWISE LEAVES THE SCENE; HE CAN ACCELERATE THE PROCESS BY CONFRONTING BEGIN,

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02937 02 OF 03 041758Z

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12
/088 W

-----119102 041801Z /50

O R 041514Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1652
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 TEL AVIV 2937

EVEN IF THIS MEANT HE HAD TO RESIGN TO TRIGGER A POLITICAL REALIGNMENT. ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT YET INCLINED TO PURSUE THE LATTER PATH, HIS ACUTE WORRIES ABOUT THE CURRENT IMPASSE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT IS MAKING HIM WEIGH IT SERIOUSLY.

8. FRUSTRATED OVER TRENDS OF EVENTS: ON MARCH 2 WEIZMAN AGAIN CONFIRMED PRIVATELY TO THE AMBASSADOR REPORTS WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT HE IS DEEPLY DEPRESSED AND FRUSTRATED OVER THE TREND OF EVENTS AND CONVINCED THAT THIS GOVERNMENT MUST NOT MISS AN HISTORIC OPPORTUNITY FOR PEACE WITH EGYPT. FOR THE TIME BEING, HE IS UNLIKELY TO UNDERTAKE ANY MAJOR MOVE THAT WOULD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02937 02 OF 03 041758Z

GIVE EXPRESSION TO HIS CONCERN. HE CLAIMS TO BE TROUBLED BY INDECISION AS TO WHICH COURSE TO FOLLOW AND IS HANDICAPPED BY POLITICAL INEXPERIENCE. BUT HIS POSITION HAS BECOME THE FOCLA POINT FROM WHICH ANY CHANGE IN THE CABINET IS LIKELY TO DEVELOP.

9. WEIZMAN SCORED A PARTIAL VICTORY ON FEB 26 WITH THE CABINET'S DECISION TO CEASE ALL NEW SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN SINAI, AND LIMIT IT IN THE WEST BANK TO ESTABLISHING THE TWO NEW SETTLEMENTS IN THE ARMY CAMPS WHICH HAD EARLIER BEEN APPROVED BY THE GOVERNMENT. (TEL AVIV 2624) THE CABINET STATEMENT WAS INTENTIONALLY VAGUE TO PERMIT BEGIN TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST VIRULENT ATTACKS FROM HIS OLD COMRADES ON THE RIGHT. WEIZMAN URGED A CLEARCUT ANNOUNCEMENT OF A MORATORIUM ON SETTLEMENT ACTIVITY IN THE TERRITORIES, PERIOD. FOR A SHORT TIME HE TOYED WITH THE IDEA OF FIGHTING THE MAJORITY DECISION. HE CANDIDLY TOLD US THAT HE WALKED OUT OF THE CABINET MEETING TO ASK THE ADVICE OF FRIENDS. IN DECIDING TO ACCEPT WHAT HE TERMED HIS 80 PERCENT VICTORY, WEIZMAN AVOIDED CONFRONTATION WITH BEGIN, BUT HE REMAINS UNEASY OVER THE LARGER PICTURE OF PEACE. HE SUBSEQUENTLY RETURNED TO THE CHARGE ON MARCH 1 AND OPENLY CHALLENGED SHARON BY ORDERING THE IDF TO EXCLUDE SETTLERS FROM A NEW INSTALLATION IN THE EASTERN SINAI. SHARON COMPLAINED IN THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON MARCH 2. WEIZMAN WENT AFTER HIS HAMMER AND TONS IN WHAT HAS BEEN DESCRIBED TO US BY ANOTHER MINISTER AS A "DREADFUL ARGUMENT". WEIZMAN INSISTED THAT BEGIN AND THE CABINET BACK HIM, AND HE WON THAT ROUND. THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAS LEFT WEIZMAN IN A DEFIANT FRAME OF MIND.

10. SUCCESSFUL DEFMIN: WEIZMAN IS A RECENT CONVERT TO MODERATION. HE HIMSELF OFTEN CALLS ATTENTION TO HIS EVOLUTION, AS IF STILL SURPRISED BY THE TRANSFORMATION. DURING THE FIRST FEW MONTHS IN OFFICE HE GENERALLY STUCK TO THE NARROW CONFINES OF MILITARY MATTERS. ALTHOUGH HE WAS GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LEBANESE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02937 02 OF 03 041758Z

THEATRE, WEIZMAN'S ROLE IN PEACE PLANNING WAS MINIMAL. A HIGHLY-SUCCESSFUL COMMANDER OF THE AIR FORCE IN THE 60'S, WEIZMAN MOVED EASILY INTO HIS JOB AS DEFENSE MINISTER -- ANOTHER IN THE

LINE OF HIGH-CALIBRE MEN WHO HAVE HELD THAT PORTFOLIO IN ISRAELI GOVERNMENTS. HE OVERSAW THE SMOOTH TRANSITION AND ADJUSTMENT OF IDF TO THE NEW LIKUD REGIME AFTER A GENERATION OF UNINTERRUPTED LABOR HEGEMONY. HIS INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL MATTERS, HOWEVER, INCREASED DRAMATICALLY WITH SADAT'S VISIT. BEGINNING WITH HIS IMMEDIATE RAPPORT WITH SADAT AND THEN WITH GAMASY, WEIZMAN HAS FIGURED EVER-MORE PROMINENTLY IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT AND HAS OUTSHONE DAYAN'S PERFORMANCE IN THE PEACE PROCESS.

11. RELATIONS WITH DAYAN: HIS RELATIONS WITH DAYAN ARE COMPLEX. THEY WERE BROTHERS-IN-LAW BEFORE DAYAN DIVORCED HIS FIRST WIFE. (RUTH DAYAN AND MRS. WEIZMAN ARE SISTERS.) THE DIVORCE LEFT THEIR PREVIOUS GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS STRAINED. IN ADDITION, A POLITICAL RIVALRY HAS NOW DEVELOPED BETWEEN THE TWO WITH WEIZMAN CLEARLY IN THE LEAD. THE COLLAPSE OF THE JERUSALEM POLITICAL TALKS UNDER DAYAN IS COMPARED WITH WEIZMAN'S GOOD RAPPORT WITH THE EGYPTIANS AT THE CAIRO DISCUSSIONS. OTHER RECENT POOR SHOWINGS BY DAYAN, SUCH AS HIS U.S. TOUR AND THE ETHIOPIAN ARMS GAFFE, HAVE ALSO DAMAGED HIS IMAGE VIS-A-VIS WEIZMAN'S. WEIZMAN'S PUBLIC PERFORMANCE IN THE U.S. WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHED HERE FOR FURTHER CONTRAST WITH DAYAN'S LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL VISIT.

12. TRANSFORMATION TO POLITICIAN: ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE CERTAIN OF A TURNING POINT, WEIZMAN SEEMS TO HAVE BEGUN MELLOWING AFTER THE YOM KIPPUR WAR. PERHAPS IT WAS THE SEVERE WOUNDS SUSTAINED BY HIS SON IN THE WAR OF ATTRITION. WEIZMAN HAD BEEN AN ULTRA-HAWK, GIVEN TO JINGOISM AND HARSH INTEMPERATE STATEMENTS. ALTHOUGH HIS CHAUVINISM MAY HAVE SUITED HIS PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS AS A FLAMBOYANT FIGHTER PILOT AND INSTILLER OF ELAN IN ISRAEL'S FLEDGING AIR FORCE, WHEN HE TURNED TO POLITICS AFTER THE 1967 WAR HE WAS MARKED AS AN EXTREMIST, EVEN TO THE RIGHT OF BEGIN. HOWEVER, UNLIKE BEGIN AND THE OTHER VINTAGE HERUT STALWARTS, WEIZMAN'S MAXIMALISM WAS ROOTED IN PRAGMATISM AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 02937 02 OF 03 041758Z

SECURITY CONCERNS, NOT IDEOLOGY OR THE BIBLE. "THE ARABS DON'T ACCEPT US. ANOTHER WAR IS INEVITABLE. DON'T GIVE THEM AN INCH." WHATEVER THE PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF HIS CHANGE, FACED WITH THE POLITICAL REALITY OF AN ELECTORATE WILLING TO COMPROMISE FOR PEACE AND DISTRUSTFUL OF HERUT EXTREMISM, WEIZMAN BEGAN COUNSELING CHANGE IN HERUT'S TACTICS TO GIVE ITS IMAGE A DIMENSION OF REASONABLENESS. IN LAST YEAR'S KNESSET CAMPAIGN WEIZMAN, AT LEAST, AVOIDED PROVOCATIVE RHETORIC ON FOREIGN POLICY. WHETHER OR NOT THIS MADE ANY CONTRIBUTION TO THE LIKUD'S VICTORY, WEIZMAN'S TONING-DOWN BECAME NOTICEABLE. AS A POLITICIAN, WEIZMAN REMAINS THE SOMETIMES OVERBEARING, BLUNT, HIGHLY ASSERTIVE PERSONALITY HE WAS AS AIR FORCE COMMANDER. BUT HIS PERSONAL CHARM IS A CONSTANT FACTOR AND THROUGH IT ALL HE IS AN ENGAGING, STRAIGHTFORWARD, LIKEABLE MAN.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02937 03 OF 03 041821Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SSM-03
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-12
/088 W

-----119193 041823Z /50

O R 041514Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1653
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI
USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 TEL AVIV 2937

13. OVEREMPHASIS ON WEIZMAN'S NEW-FOUND MODERATION SHOULD BE
AVOIDED. IT IS RELATIVE AND ONLY STANDS OUT AMONG THE HARD-
LINERS OF HIS OWN PARTY AND THE NRP. IT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE
WEST BANK ON WHICH HE AGREES WITH BEGIN THAT THERE CAN BE NO
ULTIMATE TOTAL IDF WITHDRAWAL FROM THE JORDAN "SECURITY FRONT-
IER", PROVIDING A CONTRAST, FOR EXAMPLE, WITH HINTS OF DAYAN'S
FLEXIBILITY ON THIS ISSUE. THIS APPARENT INCONSISTENCY SPRINGS
FROM WEIZMAN'S ARRIVING AT THE PERCEPTION THAT EGYPT, WHICH HAS
ALWAYS BEEN THE MAIN MILITARY THREAT, NOW TRULY WANTS PEACE,
THAT A NEUTRALIZED EGYPT WOULD GIVE ISRAEL A FREER HAND TO DEAL
WITH THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM AND SYRIA AND THAT MISSING THIS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02937 03 OF 03 041821Z

OPPORTUNITY WOULD BE DISASTROUS FOR ISRAEL.

14. EXTENT OF POLITICAL SUPPORT: DESPITE HIS RECENT PROTEST-ATIONS OF BEING "FED-UP WITH IT ALL" AND HIS HINTS OF RETIREMENT, WEIZMAN DEFINITELY HAS HIS EYES ON THE PREMIERSHIP. IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS HE HAS BEEN BUSY TRYING TO STRENGTHEN HIS POLITICAL BASE. HE HAS BEEN ARRANGING QUIET MEETINGS WITH INDIVIDUAL HERUT MEMBERS, CAREFULLY CULTIVATING THE PARTY WHICH IN THE LAST ANALYSIS MUST BE HIS PRIME SOURCE OF POLITICAL STRENGTH. HE HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES WITH THE REST OF THE LIKUD. WHILE LA'AM IS LUKEWARM, WITH ABOUT HALF THE MEMBERSHIP DEVOTED TO DAYAN, THE LIBERAL PARTY IS INCREASINGLY ENAMORED OF WEIZMAN. EHRlich'S STOCK HAS RECENTLY FALLEN AS HIS HIGHLY-TOUTED NEW ECONOMIC MEASURES FALTER (HE WAS NEVER SEEN AS MORE THAN A SECOND FIDDLE TO BEGIN'S LEADERSHIP), AND THE LIBERALS ARE CASTING ABOUT FOR A NEW LEADER OF NATIONAL STANDING.

15. WHILE WEIZMAN'S POLITICAL SUPPORT IS THUS BROADENING, IT REMAINS SHALLOW. HE LACKS DEEP COMMITMENT FROM HIS ADMIRERS AND CAN COUNT AMONG HIS FOLLOWERS NO POLITICAL HEAVY-WEIGHTS. THIS COULD BE PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT SHOULD BEGIN NAME A SUCCESSOR OTHER THAN WEIZMAN BEFORE LEAVING THE SCENE. APPARENTLY HIS CLOSEST ADVISERS ARE SUCH NON-POLITICIANS AS HIS DEFENSE MINISTRY DIRECTOR-GENERAL (ZUSSMAN), HIS DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE (GAZIT) AND DAVID KOLITZ. KOLITZ, WHO MADE HIS FORTUNE IN THE EXPORT-IMPORT BUSINESS, IS A FORMER BUSINESS PARTNER OF WEIZMAN'S AND A CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND. WEIZMAN PUT HIM ON THE DELEGATION TO THE FIRST CAIRO MILITARY TALKS. ALTHOUGH KOLITZ COMES FROM A HERUT BACKGROUND, HE IS NOT IN POLITICS.

16. DISTANCING FROM BEGIN: WITHOUT MUCH HOPE IN THE RESULT, WEIZMAN IS QUIETLY PUSHING FOR ANOTHER BEGIN-SADAT MEETING WITH PUBLICITY KEPT TO A MINIMUM. HE WANTS IT TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02937 03 OF 03 041821Z

BEGIN GOES TO WASHINGTON. BUT IT IS NOT ONLY THE SLIPPING AWAY OF THE PEACE OPPORTUNITY THAT IS GNAWING AT WEIZMAN. HE FEELS THAT THE ENTIRE DOMESTIC SCENE IS ABOUT TO ERUPT WITH DISCONTENT OVER THE ECONOMY AND THE GOVERNMENT'S INACTION ON ISRAEL'S SOCIAL ILLS. WEIZMAN CONFIDES TO US THAT HE HAS BEEN URGING ON A SO FAR UNRECEPTIVE BEGIN THE CREATION OF A "NATIONAL PEACE COALITION" GOVERNMENT UNDER BEGIN TO INCLUDE THE LABOR PARTY.

17. MEANWHILE, WEIZMAN SHOWS SIGNS OF THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS DIVORCING HIMSELF FROM BEGIN'S NEGOTIATING STRATEGY. FEARFUL OF FAILURE IN WASHINGTON, HE ASKED BEGIN TO LEAVE HIM OFF THE DELEGATION. AS A FALL-BACK, WEIZMAN HOPES TO SIT OUT THE CARTER-BEGIN TALKS IN NEW YORK, REMAINING ON-CALL IF NEEDED. BEGIN IS NOT EXPECTED TO COMPLY WITH WEIZMAN'S ATTEMPT AT SEPARATION. CONSUMMATE POLITICIAN THAT HE IS, BEGIN'S SUSPICIONS ARE UN-

DOUBTEDLY AROUSED. IN FACT, WEIZMAN ADMITS THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO, NEVER CLOSE AND STILL SCARRED BY THE BREAK IN 1972 WHEN WEIZMAN'S ATTEMPT AT CHALLENGING BEGIN'S AUTHORITARIANISM IN HERUT LED TO HIS POLITICAL EXILE, HAVE LATELY BECOME FRAYED AS WEIZMAN IS INCREASINGLY OUTSPOKEN WITH BEGIN. WE HAVE NOTICED A CHANGE IN WEIZMAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD BEGIN IN OUR PRESENCE. HIS EARLIER STUDIED DEFERENCE TO THE PRIME MINISTER HAS VANISHED. HE NOW OFTEN SHOWS DISAGREEMENT WITH BEGIN'S ARGUMENTS WITHOUT EXPRESSING IT VERBALLY.

18. HOWEVER, PUBLICLY AT LEAST WEIZMAN IS MOVING VERY CAREFULLY. IN BEGIN HE IS UP AGAINST A MASTER POLITICIAN AND A PREMATURE OR ILL-CONSIDERED STEP BY WEIZMAN COULD SPELL HIS POLITICAL DEMISE. THE RESPONSE TO OUR ATTEMPTS TO DRAW OUT LIKUD MKS ON WEIZMAN'S POLITICAL MANEUVERING AND PROSPECTS WITHIN THE LIKUD DEMONSTRATES THE RISKS FOR WEIZMAN IN WORKING BEHIND BEGIN'S BACK. THEY SHY AWAY FROM THE SUBJECT AND THE REACTION IS OFTEN EMBARRASSMENT.

19. THE PRIME MINISTER IS HIMSELF UNDER DEFINITE RESTRAINTS IN DEALING WITH WEIZMAN. UNLIKE HIS PRINCIPAL PROTAGONIST, SHARON, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 02937 03 OF 03 041821Z

WEIZMAN MIGHT BRING DOWN THIS GOVERNMENT BY RESIGNING OVER THE RIGHT ISSUE AT THE RIGHT TIME. WHILE IT WOULD WOUND BEGIN MORE PERSONALLY TO MOVE AGAINST SHARON WITH WHOM HE EMPATHIZES, THE POLITICAL RISKS WOULD BE LESS THAN IN ANTAGONIZING WEIZMAN. IF THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY WERE SEIZED WEIZMAN MIGHT BE ABLE TO REACH OUTSIDE THE LIKUD AND MAKE COMMON CAUSE WITH THE DCM AND EVEN THE LABOR PARTY. IT IS IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HIS CALL FOR A NATIONAL PEACE COALITION WITH LABOR COMES TO MIND. THE IMPLICIT THREAT OF WEIZMAN UNSEATING HIM IS ENOUGH TO GIVE BEGIN PAUSE. IF HE HAS TO CHOOSE BETWEEN SHARON AND WEIZMAN, OUR GUESS IS THAT HE WOULD OPT FOR THE LATTER. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE COLLAPSE OF THE PEACE EFFORT, OR A DETERIORATION IN BEGIN'S HEALTH, COULD BRING WEIZMAN TO THE FORE EVEN WITHOUT ANY DIRECT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE DEFENSE MINISTER. WEIZMAN HOPES TO INHERIT THE PREMIERSHIP WITHOUT SPLITTING WITH BEGIN. HE WILL CONTINUE SHORING UP HIS POLITICAL SUPPORT WAITING FOR IT TO FALL TO HIM AS THE PUTATIVE HEIR-APPARENT. YET HE MUST WATCH FOR THE UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY LEST HE MISS THE BOAT COMPLETELY.

LEWIS

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL LEADERS, MINISTERS (DIPLOMATS)
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978TELAV02937
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780099-0749
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803105/aaaadlls.tel
Line Count: 433
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 57427bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 8
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3113920
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WEIZMAN'S NEW ROLE AS MODERATE HEIR APPARENT
TAGS: PINT, IS, (WEIZMAN, EZER)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/57427bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014